

Pam.
Pacif. Is.
Hawaii

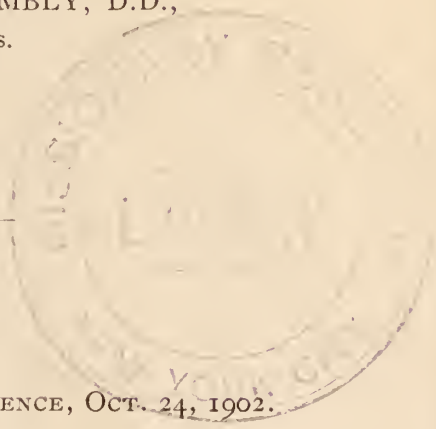
6231

THE SITUATION IN HAWAII,

OCTOBER, 1902.

BY

ALEXANDER S. TWOMBLY, D.D.,
NEWTON, MASS.



READ AT THE MOHONK CONFERENCE, OCT. 24, 1902.

BOSTON, MASS.:

FRANK WOOD, PRINTER, 352 WASHINGTON STREET.

1902.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016

THE SITUATION IN HAWAII.

It was a wise policy on the part of President Roosevelt to summon Governor Dole to Washington in April of this year. The object was not so much to consider the charges preferred by malcontents against the governor's administration as to discuss the Hawaiian situation in all its political and economic features.

The governor was accompanied by a delegation of some of the leaders of the Republican party in Honolulu, and the visit resulted in Mr. Dole's confirmation as governor for his unexpired term of two years, and in the presentation to the President of a complete statement of affairs in the islands. Attorney-General Knox and other high officials also received the delegation.

The President is now aware, as never before, that the transformation of Hawaii on correct principles is a serious problem of the United States Government in connection with legislation for all our other outlying dependencies.

Under early American influences Hawaii had a natural, self-centered, and slow growth. Its new epoch, at the beginning of the twentieth century, is artificial, forced upon it almost wholly by external conditions. Formerly, the group drifted; now it feels the stress of modern requirements and steers for a conventional harbor.

Romance died with the extinction of the old chiefs. Modern civilization has suddenly grafted the sprouts of the temperate zone on a semi-tropical stock, which needs special nurture to bear good fruit in this time of its unwonted quickening. Add to these grafts of the better sort the pest of imported human parasites, and the result awakens grave apprehension.

The United States Government, at this juncture, is called upon to work out in Hawaii some of the most vital questions in statecraft. The islands offer a virgin soil for the solution of these new problems. The task is a complicated and difficult one.

The ethnic problem comes first. The handful of men and women of real American blood and education, many of them born on the islands, numbers a few thousands. These, with a limited muster roll of other white nationalities, are the nucleus of brains and integrity in the midst of a heterogeneous collection of other varieties of mankind.

A majority of the present one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants are Asiatics, ninety thousand or more. They are alien to our institutions, and, as a whole, are incapable of American citizenship in its true sense.

The Japanese, about sixty thousand, can come and go freely.

The desire for cheap labor makes them important. Their number will probably not increase. They cannot be imported as coolies under our federal laws, but many arrive, and about as many return annually. While the higher ranks, merchants and educated persons, are progressive, the laborers are slow in the line of advance. Few if any Japanese will desire naturalization, but they are very tenacious of their rights as residents.

The Portuguese, several thousands, are aggressive, thrifty and superstitious. They have political clubs, and nominate candidates of their own. They are not considered a dangerous element, either socially or politically, although petty misdemeanors are common among them.

The thirty thousand of pure natives offer only a temporary problem to the statesmen of America. In a few generations they will become extinct. The death rate among them rapidly increases, and few children are born to Hawaiian fathers and mothers. Just now, because they form a majority of legal voters, they are prominently in the field as political opponents of the best white element. They sent the Home Rule leader, Wilcox, to Congress, and control the elections by virtue of superior numbers. Their low average in intelligence is as bad in legislation as a low *morale*. Whether the *kanakas* can resist bribes and lobbyists remains to be tested.

Of the part-white Hawaiians much more is expected as citizens, socially and politically, but the life of the pure native, as such, will soon have no place in Hawaii. It lingers in the interior of the islands, with much of its old ignorance and prejudice. It is becoming a hybrid, especially in Honolulu, the only large city of the group. It is picturesque, like the scenery and the foliage, but has no inherent persistency in any direction, and acts spasmodically as the politician tickles its sluggish nerve-centers with promises which never can be fulfilled.

There is in it no basis for radical changes, social or political, but the memory of many droll performances in the last session of the legislature is having its effect even on the *kanakas*.

The test for the franchise is now on such a low plane that ignorance and inability seem to set the standard of citizenship.

Some one has said that "slavery pickled Southern life and left it just where it found it." So the false theories of education in the Hawaii of the early century not only pickled but bottled up the Hawaiian-speaking natives. They will not advance, although their limited number of children are now taught English in the schools. A considerable number of the members of the last legislature were not familiar with the English language. This made the work of that body abortive, and almost wrecked the Home Rulers as a deliberative assembly.

The worst element in Hawaii to-day is the low-down American, adventurer or politician. If he has brains, this late comer is the carpet-bagger of the transitionary period, the demagogue in politics, and the disgraceful, dissipated scamp. He has crept even into the

judiciary and other offices. One has just been detected in large speculations. If such men are federal appointees, it is difficult to dislodge them.

As for the ordinary scalawags, deserters from ships, drinking loafers found in all large cities, professional criminals, men out of work because of shiftlessness or hard times, and the thousand and one "ne'er do weels" of reckless habits, many come to Hawaii from the States and are American citizens with votes.

Now, will American farmers, colonists, artisans, respectable new settlers, offset these bad accessions to the electors of the islands?

It is said that white labor can hardly be introduced into the sugar plantations, even on the co-operative plan. Some such experiments have been tried and have failed.

On the other hand, a colony from California has completed its second year on a tract of 1,200 acres, and has started peach, orange, and lime orchards. A pineapple company has been recently incorporated. Land considered worthless has been made productive. Almost everything will grow in Hawaii. But some think the possibilities of the small farmer are limited. Land in small parcels has become increasingly inaccessible. Capital is needed, which few immigrants can command. The soil of the islands lacks phosphates, which are needed for animals.

The white farmer has also hard work to compete with the Chinaman. Therefore Americans of good repute are not expected in large numbers, while the army of American scalawags increases. Honolulu is a sort of eddy for the drift of the Pacific, and the scum accumulates. These irregulars affiliate with the Home Rule party because they have access to the natives, as the higher classes do not. They gain influence over the Hawaiian lower classes by associating freely with them. Their presence, therefore, is demoralizing and a menace to a better social and political situation.

Such, then, being the ethnic and political status of to-day, Hawaii as a territory of the United States is in a peculiar situation, in many respects unlike its condition before annexation. It has come to the parting of the ways. In one direction lies disaster; in the other, if guided aright, it will find prosperity and safety. Let us consider, first, the possibility of disaster.

Even the appearance of Honolulu is much changed, not wholly for the improvement of its outward aspect or the spectacle of its inhabitants in its streets and on its wharves. Its palm trees wave their graceful fronds and its foliage is resplendent, but it lacks many a charm which the character of its people supplied.

Annexation was alluring, because it offered a stable government and protection from foreign invasion and interference. It promised permanence to the commercial interests which the reciprocity treaty fostered. But the territorial idea has some drawbacks already apparent. To the federal government it presents unusual phases in Hawaii, never before met in our country's history. Con-

gress has here a "white man's burden," different from that presented by the Philippines, Porto Rico, Cuba, or new territories on our main land.

To straighten out the just qualifications of citizenship among the mixed inhabitants of Hawaii and the children born to them on the islands will tax not only the honesty but the ingenuity of our statesmen. It is a critical time, but it is also a splendid opportunity. Its proper acceptance involves all our outlying territorial possessions. What is done in the near future in Hawaii must surely affect our policy throughout the Pacific Isles.

The evolution of Hawaii, with ultimate statehood in the perspective, will be a basis for the solution of problems now unforeseen but inevitable.

If false sentiment concerning the decadent native race, or commercial greed, or the allowance of undesirable immigration, or, above all, if neglectful indifference destroys the opportunity, then farewell to the hope of a beneficent future.

Hawaii has not of late been accorded its rightful share of attention, either at Washington or throughout our land. It is almost a back number. Some thoughtless congressmen are reported as saying: "Hawaiians wanted annexation. Now let them work out their own destiny. Experience will teach them useful lessons."

The Spanish War, to which annexation owes its quicker success, thrust little Hawaii into sudden obscurity. The rapid march of events in the Philippines and China developed what seemed to be far more important issues than the fate of a few fly-specks on the map of the Pacific. Even the trust problem, in its present crucial stage owing to the coal strike, may crowd interest in Hawaii still farther into the background.

The future condition of this Lilliputian territory, so dependent on present careful treatment, is therefore in imminent peril. Hawaii may be sacrificed in its profoundest interests at any critical moment to save some real or fancied necessity of our nation as a whole. Who can tell what may happen in our Oriental policy to make our legislators careless of what happens to these islands?

By and by the small comparative productiveness of its soil will count as little when our Southern fields augment their semi-tropical crops, and the West Indies yield tenfold more than now under American ownership. Hawaii may be easily undervalued as an industrial factor when our Western deserts are reclaimed by irrigation.

How readily might it come into the hands of great industrial or commercial promoters! Independent holdings, small ownerships, giving place to large plantations, may be combined in one great trust, and the worst American practices go on unchecked.

Besides, Hawaii will sometime reach the limit of its possible population. It can have but two leading cities, Honolulu and Hilo, and these cannot be very large. The immense commerce of America with the Orient will make these cities valuable to the

United States, mainly as fitting and coaling stations. With cable communication, these islands will be treated as points of call and departure, and the welfare of their inhabitants will be of secondary consideration.

The legislation at Washington, in the hands of some future government, may correspond; and the fortified harbor, as a place to defend in time of war, will be paramount in the councils of the nation. (I am speaking now only of *possible* contingencies of which we ought to take notice.) In a few generations is it certain that our Republic will care first for the interests of a million or more of the resident population of Hawaii,—a mixed mass descended from aliens, with a small proportion of genuine American ancestry?

Hawaii is not like our own frontier territorial domain. It is not integral but external. When it reaches its limit in population and production, and is arrested in its political representation and importance, its internal affairs and domestic legislation will be subordinated to considerations which may make it the cesspool instead of the paradise of the Pacific.

This is a pessimistic view, I know, but I speak only of possibilities, which in the lapse of time may become realities, unless Hawaii, now in its incipient stage of transformation, receives the benefit of wise and special and speedy legislation for its future welfare. We cannot shut our eyes, at least to the obvious conditions which darken the prospect of the islands at the present time. Take, for example, the fact that the Americans in Hawaii can hardly hope ever to return to the simple, happy social joys and amenities of the past. A society called "The Cousins" made the little colony of Americans a brotherhood of affiliated interests. It is beginning already to lose its inclusiveness and charm. No longer can doors and windows remain unlocked or open through the sweet, tropical, moonlight night. The sneak thief and the burglar are abroad in the land.

Since annexation the liquor traffic has increased in portentous proportions. The pastor of a Portuguese missionary church in Honolulu reports that ninety-five per cent of the Portuguese, children and adults, are addicted to the drink habit. The Hawaiian native is fond of stimulants, and regardless of consequences. The Chinaman is an opium smoker, but all other nationalities patronize the saloons, which extend over the whole group.

The Home Rule government is responsible, for there is revenue in the business. Annexation placed it under the laws of the territorial legislature. The present policy increases the sale of intoxicants. Licenses are freely issued.

Moreover, the increase of drunkenness and crime follows the obstructions to justice in the courts. Says a leading newspaper: "The administration of justice in the First Circuit Court of Honolulu has been of late a byword and a farce. Every possible technicality is construed in favor of the criminal. One judge dismissed forty-one and another sixty-nine cases on technical grounds alone."

A part of this increase of crime arises from the fact that judges who are appointees of the Government at Washington cannot easily be removed. There is no separate municipal authority. The social evil in Honolulu became so scandalous in an attempt to keep it off the streets that Governor Dole and the high sheriff of the United States Court were obliged to interfere.

The President's decision to appoint Mr. De Bolt to the first judgeship of the First Circuit Court marks a new departure at Washington in the matter of judicial nominations. Hereafter some care will be taken with them. Mr. De Bolt has fine qualifications for judge, and, with his colleague, Judge Robinson, may be trusted to redeem the local bench from the disgrace brought upon it by other incumbents.

As to the financial condition of the group, we may quote a leading Republican journal as authority for the statement that "before the Home Rule legislature met the times were good. Home Rule legislation, however, destroyed confidence; outside capital, an indispensable requisite, was refused. Holding up appropriations to carry on public administration and the attempt to multiply offices threatened the sugar industry. Business was paralyzed. The territory cannot stand another session like the last." That session left a deficit in the treasury very embarrassing to the administration.

Another recent report declares that "the cutting off of dividends and the shrinkage of values have given Hawaiian securities a black eye in San Francisco." The reason given is that in this transition period "labor is unsettled. Hawaii has lost its contract system. The new laborers are not as efficient. Prices of everything are higher. Equipment is more expensive, and many have lost heavily by the fall in sugar values."

The political situation has also much to do with this unfortunate condition of affairs. The test for the present franchise in the territory of Hawaii is now on so low a plane that ignorance and inability are the standard.

But let us turn now to the hopeful side of the situation. A majority of the best people in Hawaii will not hear of any other. Governor Dole is perhaps among them, having returned from his visit to the States much more sanguine of results. He believes there will be another alignment of parties when the next election comes along. The lack in fulfillment of their promises by the leaders of the opposition last year has cost them their prestige, especially in the outlying districts.

There are three political parties in Hawaii. The Home Rule polls the largest vote, as the old Royalists and nearly every native vote that ticket. Delegate Wilcox is the leader of that party, but the ex-queen has repudiated him, and he has made himself unpopular with the natives by a bill in Congress to make the leper settlement on the island of Molokai a lazar home for all lepers in the United States. Yet he still has a fair hold on the natives.

Then there are the Democrats and the Republicans. There are some good and honest members of the Democratic party, but they have not achieved much thus far. Some have lately gone over to the Home Rule party.

Prince Kuhio is the candidate of the Republican party as delegate to Congress, as opposed to Wilcox. He is the ex-queen's favorite nephew, and is taken by the Republicans to conciliate the natives.

But whatever the result of the coming election, the best Hawaiians rely the most for a turn in their affairs upon the retirement of unworthy judges by the Federal Government and a reform in the judiciary. The authorities at Washington are gradually finding out the character of some of their officials in Hawaii. The commission appointed by Congress and recently sitting in Hawaii, Senators Burton of Kansas, Foster of Washington and Mitchell of Oregon, ought to be able to enlighten our legislators as to the true situation in the islands.

After all, the main hope of Hawaii lies in that fraction of its population which is composed of able, vigorous and sincere men and women who are ready to sacrifice themselves for the salvation of their native or adopted land.

All the resources of these tried and true patriots are at the command of the Federal Government, if only they can be upheld by intelligent and honest legislation at Washington.

What may be achieved by a little leaven of upright and alert men was proved during the existence of the Hawaiian Republic, from the year 1894 to 1898. In its brief life it was one of the very best of the independent states on earth. There were absolutely no peculations; no oppression of the natives; there was a gradual suppression of crime; the judiciary was above suspicion; foreign diplomacy was straightforward and dignified.

One of the firm Royalists of Oahu, the father of the Princess Kai-u-la-ni, declared to the writer that the men at the head of affairs were of the highest order of integrity and ability.

In this class of citizens are to-day merchants and planters whose credit abroad is equal to that of any commercial and industrial magnates in America.

This better element is also reinforced by the best of the educated natives and a large number of the part whites.

If I may add religious purpose to the characteristics above cited without prejudice to the name "missionary" given as a term of reproach, I need only point to the practical philanthropy of Protestant and Catholic men and women, and to their active Christian work in behalf of their fellow-men.

The native ministers and a goodly following of their flocks are loyal to good government. The Catholic priests, who seldom meddle with politics, do what is possible for the order and morality of their adherents.

There is a Protestant Board of Missions, unassisted by any aid

outside the islands, which has disbursed nearly a million of dollars since 1863; one third of this large sum has been spent on the islands of the Southern Seas, and two thirds in work among the nationalities represented in Hawaii.

A much larger sum has been contributed for the maintenance of churches, native and white, throughout the group.

There is also a new generation of young Hawaiians, American by birth, now receiving their education in our American schools and colleges, who return to their native isles full of ambition and hope. Foster their patriotic zeal for the extension in Hawaii of the highest American ideals, and the places now worthily held by their fathers will be equally well filled by their descendants.

Among other promising resources of Hawaii are the college and the school. The equipment for teaching all the children in the group is complete; the instruction is in English, and the teachers, many from New England, are capable and zealous. No nationality is exempt from compulsory attendance. The system embraces even the children of the lepers on Molokai.

One thing cheers beyond measure all friends everywhere of true progress in Hawaii. It is President Roosevelt's interest in the islands. The friends of good government and righteous law know that he is a man of loyal nature, whose convictions never allow his acts to lag behind them.

From him, Hawaii, in this trying transitional period, expects co-operation in its strenuous efforts to bring the territory, in due time, into the front rank of the republic's most progressive states.

If Hawaii shall obtain legislation that will start her great sugar industry upon a career of renewed prosperity; if she shall obtain legislation that will enable her to retain for local improvement the customs revenues whose export drain her life blood; if she shall secure payment of the indebtedness incurred by her in using the torch to save her people and the people of the mainland from pestilence,—if she shall obtain any or all of these things she must obtain them from the Republican party, for it is in power in Congress and it is there to stay. It is with the voters of Hawaii now to determine with which party they will identify themselves. Will they march forward with the swelling Republican legions? or will they drag backward with the dwindling and retreating forces of Democracy? The choice is with them, and as they choose wisely or unwisely will the destinies of these beautiful islands be affected.

Considering, then, the changes thus far for better or worse, in that land of sunny skies and surpassing beauty,—and, notwithstanding our regret that never will the old days of restful simplicity in living return to that fair heritage of ours beyond the sea,—may we not indulge the hope that all true Americans will unite with those who are striving, as their fathers strove in the past, to make Hawaii a Christian state?

There are noble hearts in that "gem of the Pacific" beating high with confidence in their share of America's bright destiny,

and who, in spite of present adversity, wait for the time when all men will acknowledge that

“He alone is great who, by a life heroic, conquers fate.”

Dr. Birnie followed.

Rev. DOUGLAS PUTNAM BIRNIE.—I count it high honor to speak to you to-day; it is a privilege to strive to make the lovers of the Indian friends of the Hawaiian. For the third time, in obedience to the commands of your committee, I am here to speak for the Island Territory, but if word of mine may win your interest in Hawaii, I am content. . . .

You have listened to the delightful paper of Dr. Twombly, which presents a careful survey of the condition of affairs. In the few minutes which are allotted to me I shall touch briefly upon the political, commercial, and ethical status of the islands, and suggest possible methods of betterment. From the figures which have been given to you this morning you perceive that although the people of Hawaiian blood number only about one fourth of the population, nevertheless, owing to the restriction of the ballot, the political control rests in their hands. The Japanese and Chinese immigrants are not permitted to vote, and the citizens of the white race form a very small portion of the population. The Hawaiian has little capacity for self-government, and Congress has placed the political control in the hands of an ignorant minority.

It is as though the political control of New York state had been placed in the hands of the Indians, and they had elected a legislative assembly, many members of which could not understand the English language. This is the condition in the territory of Hawaii. No wonder blunders were made. It is the only portion of the United States where men can legally vote who do not understand the English language.

This makes it possible for a demagogue to say to them, as some have said, “If you will only vote for me I will see that the Queen is restored to her old place with power,” and they believe it. The result has been political unrest. It is the old story of the South and the North. They never voted under the old chiefs; they were not considered capable of voting; they cannot vote intelligently to-day. There can be no peace under the present condition.

What can be done? I suppose it would be impossible to take the franchise away, though it was unwisely bestowed; but a law might be passed declaring that no man could hold office who could not read and write English, and that after a certain time no new voters should be enrolled who could not speak the language of our country. Something must be done to restrain and limit the power of the ignorant minority in the Island Territory.

Take the condition commercially. Times are hard to-day; there is bitter poverty and distress. Before annexation the custom duties

were retained in the islands; now they are sent to Washington. All prices have gone up. Food, clothing, supplies of all sorts must pay the San Francisco price plus the cost of transportation. Our exclusive policy went into effect, and no more Chinese laborers could be imported. The planters sent to Europe and the United States for white labor, but that has failed. They imported Porto Ricans at a high cost, and they have not been a success. They sent for negroes, but they could secure only the poorer quality. The labor market has not been supplied, and grade of morality has been lowered. The Japanese coolies are not desirable. They drink, are restless, discontented, untruthful, and as laborers are inferior to the Chinese. There is a proposition to introduce a limited number of Chinese to work in the cane fields alone. The Hawaiians will not do this work; the white man cannot. The Hawaiians make no objection to such importation. If you admit the Chinese to the cane fields you promote the sugar industry, and you aid every skilled white laborer who is in the islands. I see no remedy for the present unfortunate commercial distress but the importation of Chinese labor for the plantations. You noticed what Governor Taft said. I have known him since we were in Yale together, and he is a conservative, fair-minded man. He suggested that Congress should leave to the Commission to decide whether a certain number of Chinese laborers should be introduced into the Philippine Islands. I think Chinese labor will elevate the tone of the community. They are industrious, frugal, law-abiding. They are home lovers. They pay their debts. They drink no liquor. In those tropical countries the man who drinks liquor goes to the wall; it is only the man who is temperate that lasts.

The only laborer that can live under the tropical sun and can do the work thoroughly and well is the Chinaman. You need the white man for the higher grades of service and for carrying on the business enterprises of the island, but you must have the Chinese in the cane field.

Take the ethical condition of the island. Crime has increased; vice has multiplied. The ballot is in the hands of the ignorant native, and the demagogue manipulates it. Recent disclosures show corruption among high officials. The treasurer of the Dole Republic was a leading banker of high character and ability; the treasurer of the Territory under the new régime stole a large sum of money, and made good his escape from the country. The Hawaiians of character and intelligence are discouraged. The native churches are in a deplorable condition. Many pastors have entered politics, and are neglecting their proper work.

For the future, if the present commission will favor the introduction of a limited number of Chinese for labor in the cane field, and Congress enact such laws, prosperity will come again to the Islands of Hawaii. The courts should be purified, and men of high character only be named as judges. Some limitation must be placed upon the franchise. With ignorance in legislature and corruption in officials no people can prosper.

We hear it said, "Hawaii has been annexed; now let her work out her own salvation." But Congress has tied the hands of the men of intelligence, culture, and high purpose. They are discouraged. The difficulties are many. It is as though you should, in one of the boats on the lake before you, place half a dozen children and two strong men. Then tie the men hand and foot; now overturn the boat. Stand upon the wharf, dry and comfortable yourself, and with cheerful voice send the message across the water, "Save yourselves and the children committed to your care."

NOTE.

Since the Mohonk Conference of October (1902) an election has taken place in Hawaii (November 4), resulting in the success of the Republican party, by a majority of about two thousand. A safe, working majority in both houses of the legislature is secured, with better men, on the average, than those elected two years ago. Prince Kuhio takes the place of Wilcox as the delegate from the territory to Congress. At once there was a feeling of relief, and more confidence both as to good government and the revival in business. The rise in price of sugar in the United States, coming about the same time, added to the hopefulness of the situation. At present there is also a sanguine feeling in regard to proper bills for internal revenue and appropriations; for sound municipal charters and laws, and the regulation of liquor licenses, with other improvements indispensable to good order.

Now that defaulting officials have been arrested, and several changes made in federal appointments, a brighter prospect opens for an honest and non-partisan exercise of the powers of the Judiciary, especially in legislative affairs. The situation, however, is not yet free from grave possibilities of peril.

The cable, in working order and giving prompt communication with Washington, will immensely favor the political as well as the commercial interests of the islands.

The report of the Commissioners appointed by Congress not being given to the public except in a few of its suggestions, it is impossible to say whether its recommendations, as a whole, will be acceptable and beneficial to the Hawaiians. In regard to the plan to make the leper settlement on Molokai a leper house for all sorts and nationalities of leprosy suspects and actual lepers in the United States, the wisest and best Hawaiians (with the Hawaiian lepers themselves) will resist it with all the energy at their command.

As to the transfer to the Land Office at Washington of the administration of the Hawaiian land laws, without examination by men experienced in titles and with plenty of time for thorough investigation, such a movement would be disastrous in the extreme. The present land laws of the islands may be imperfect and inadequate, but they are a development of more than twenty-five years. They form a complicated system on account of peculiar relations which the natives held toward the old chiefs; for example, in the matter of water privileges and boundary lines. Without the utmost research and care, titles will be irremediably unsettled; especially if theory takes the place of a practical understanding of all the interests and questions involved.

The limited immigration of Chinese, as laborers on plantations only, continues to increase in its importance to the industrial interests of Hawaii. The Japanese grow more and more independent, and less and less inclined to keep contracts. Within proper restrictions, recommended by such statesmen as Governor Dole, there is no danger of "slavery" in Hawaii any more than in the old system of "apprenticeship" in New England.

